

Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan 2006 Annual Report

A. Managing Information

A.1 Objective: Maintain the Lodging Tax for Tourism Promotion & Development through Enhanced Awareness of Its Uses, and Tourism's Benefits & Impacts

A.1.1 Build Citizen Awareness about the Benefits/Impacts of Tourism & Uses of Lodging Tax

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau and Chamber: The Big Sky Chamber and CVB work together in an effort to educate the community on what projects are accomplished each year with the use of lodging tax. A brief presentation of advertising and promotional projects is given each year at an annual meeting of the members, and information is shared monthly in our newsletter regarding what projects and activities the CVB is involved with that enhance and promote the lodging tax revenue and the tourism dollar in Big Sky.

Challenge: No significant challenges to speak of; Big Sky has a relatively forward thinking knowledge of the benefits of tourism in our area. As a destination resort area, the awareness of tourism and our seasonal influx of visitors is widely known. The larger challenge is actually educating the community on all of the projects and promotions and respective ROI that come as a result of the funding from bed tax. Correlations between visitation and promotional spending is not generally well known.

Gold West Country: Gold West Country has made "education to the legislators" one of the three goals for 2006/2007. We have put the whole board on this committee and will start including this topic at our meetings.

A.1.2: Build Awareness among Elected Officials about Tourism's Impacts & Benefits

Glacier Country: 2004 Priority 4 - Tourism Pie Day in Helena - February 2003 - Visit to Senators while at Affordable Meetings in Washington DC and discussed fires of 2003 & Going-to-the-Sun Road financing - Executive Director testified at DNRC hearing regarding use of bed tax to pay for fire fighting costs February 2004 - Invited new gubernatorial and legislative candidates to April & May 2004 board meetings - Jay Robson & Linda Anderson put 04 plan together - Invited candidates to September board meeting - Tourism event in Helena being planned for 3/14 & 15/05 - As well as Tourism Treats & MT. Tourism Coalition Function at 2005 Governor's Conference. Candidates of State & Congress will be invited to the board meeting in April and May of 2006 to be updated and educated on tourism.

Tourism education event at the Governor's Conference in Tourism in April 2006. Jay Robson and Executive Director to coordinate.

Gold West Country: Gold West Country will address this in their Legislative Committee meetings.

Russell Country: Russell Country will work to educate continuing legislators and also candidates for the legislature. Legislators and candidates will be invited to our board meetings and we will provide them with literature about tourism in north central Montana and statewide.

The Russell Country board will continue to seek partnership opportunities with other tourism regions, convention and visitor bureaus, and tourism associations to educate elected officials.

A.1.3: Seek Endorsements from Communities & "Non-Tourism" Organizations

A.2 Objective: Conduct Strategic Promotions that Attract Top Priority Markets

A.2.1: Coordinate Advertising to Maximize State, Regional & Private Return on Investment

Custer Country: Custer Country has increased its budget for Consumer Advertising in order to reach more Target Groups, as identified in our Marketing Plan.

Glacier Country: 2003-2006 Priority 1 - 03/04 Travel Shows & Show Mailings & Telemarketing/Fulfillment & Advertising & Direct Mail & E-Direct Mail & Travel Guide & Internet Development - Solicited & Received private funding for TV Ad about the fires in Glacier National Park - Solicited & Received private funding to attend the LA Times Travel Show - Worked with several organizations on the RMI Mega Fam - Participated in online media buy with Glacier Country businesses to generate over 20,000 inquiries in the first month - Linda attended meeting with local businesses and CVB's to coordinate consumer trade show attendance - Glacier Country seeking private sponsorships to attend Pow Wow, REI, Seattle & LA Times Travel Shows - Glacier Country & 3 CVB's shared cost of ad in Pacific NW Meeting Planner's Guide - Full page advertisement in the October 2005 issue of NWA World Traveler magazine. Press trip to work with PBS on an episode of Weekend Explorer to be filmed in Glacier Country. Winter ski photo in NWA World Traveler Magazine - Participated in online media buy with Glacier County members again in the fall/winter of 2004 - Winter of 2006 custom photo shot to capture 'winter in Glacier Country - winter filming and the DVD project completed Jan/06. Fall of 2005 participated with Travel Montana in REI Winter Program in

Minneapolis. 2006 solicited and received private funding to attend the LA & Seattle trade shows.

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue utilizing research from contracted studies as well as ITRR to effectively market the state in order to maximize ROI.

Electronic Marketing: MPD electronic Marketing will continue to work with our marketing partners to develop and host informational Web sites at no cost to them. Some examples are our partnerships are the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the North East Montana Birding Trail.

Russell Country: To showcase north central Montana, Russell Country will participate in joint venture print advertising with Travel Montana. We will also partner on consumer travel show marketing with other tourism regions and private tourism businesses. Russell Country and the Great Falls CVB will continue their partnership magazine campaign and also their travel planner partnership

A.2.2: Encourage Cross-Promotion between Tourism Partners & Sectors

Glacier Country: 2003-2006 Priority 2 - 03/04 NTA Night & Telemarketing/Fulfillment & Advertising & Direct Mail & E-Direct Mail & Travel Guide & Internet Development & Promotion - Two "Power of Packaging" Seminars with Joe Veneto - Fall Web Specials - Go West Trade Show with Travel Montana - Spring Packaging E-Direct Mail, press release, and web page - Participated in online media buy with Glacier Country businesses to generate over 20,000 inquiries in the first month - 04 NTA Night Attendance - Glacier Country seeking private sponsors to attend LA Times & Seattle Travel Shows - Glacier Country & 3 CVB's shared cost of ad in Pacific NW Meeting Planner's Guide - Participated in online media buy with Glacier County members again in the fall/winter of 2004 - Executive Director to attend SWOT meeting with FWP - Amtrak press trip with the Whitefish CVB - Press trips and SATW Conference with the Missoula CVB - Winter ski photo in NWA World Traveler Magazine - '06 private sponsorships for REI, LA & Seattle Times Shows - 05/06 Meeting planners guide with cvbs and private businesses - Full page advertisement in the October 2005 issue of NWA World Traveler magazine. Press trip with Margaret Shakespeare. Press trip to work with PBS on an episode of Weekend Explorer to be filmed in Glacier Country. Winter of 2006 custom photo shoot to capture 'winter in Glacier Country - winter filming and continuation of the DVD project with PBS. Clips used by PBS at the LA Times Travel Show January 2006. Program to air May 2006. 5/06 NTA Night & Telemarketing/Fulfillment & Advertising & Direct Mail & E-Direct Mail & Travel Guide & Internet Development & Promotion.

Missouri River Country:

VISION

- Missouri River Country will plan to have an Educational Forum for the Public and Landowners to educate them on the Dinosaur Trail and Birding Trail. Missouri River Country's objective is to show the Public and Private Sectors how to create economic opportunities from these two trails and the ethics to stay within the laws.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Missouri River Country will plan to partner with Outfitters and Guides to increase awareness and the economic impact of the Dinosaur and Birding Trails. By working with the Outfitters and Guides we will increase the recreational and economical opportunities in Missouri River Country.

CHALLENGES

- Missouri River Country faces several challenges with this topic. First is to get the people involved and attend the Educational Forum. Next is to get them to follow through with what they have learned. A survey will be performed to see if this Educational Forum has made an economic impact on the area.

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue working with ski areas, regions/cvbs, private partners, neighboring states, etc. on tourism promotion.

Electronic Marketing: MPD electronic Marketing will continue to support, develop and host cross promotional initiatives between Travel Montana and third parties (ex: private business, Regions) such as sweepstakes and email campaigns.

A.2.3: Consider Options for Film Production Incentives

Montana Promotion Division:

Montana Film Office: The Montana Film Office was successful in completing the research for a film production incentive and working with the bill's sponsor and the administration to get HB 584 passed through the Montana legislature in 2005. On May 17, 2005 the Big Sky on the Big Screen Act (HB 584) was signed into law by Governor Brian Schweitzer and Montana had its first film incentive program.

The film office has worked diligently in conjunction with the Department of Revenue to implement HB 584. The film office certified 6 productions in 2005 which are currently in the process of filing their tax returns and incentive claims with the Department of Revenue for the 2005 tax year.

The film office will continue to work with the Department of Revenue to complete the administrative rules for HB 584. The film office will also ramp up promotional efforts to encourage film productions to film in Montana and take advantage of our new tax incentive. For more information contact Sten Iversen at the Montana Promotion Division Film Office, 406-41-2879, or e-mail sten@visitmt.com.

A.2.4: Plan for Promotion of Special Events & Challenges

Custer Country: Custer Country has provided \$14,000 of Private Funds to the Pompeys Pillar Signature Event. Additionally, we have awarded TM Cooperative Marketing grants to the Miles City Chamber of Commerce, and will be awarding additional funds from private dollars to help sponsor, promote and facilitate their Corps II and Clark on the Lower Yellowstone events in June, 2006.

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Work with Clark on the Yellowstone in promoting event both in-state and out-of-state.

Electronic Marketing: An initiative recently proposed in our MPD marketing focus group is to promote and Web cast, on our primary consumer site visitmt.com, selected feature events across the state.

A.3 Objective: Create New Tourism & Recreation Products through Packaging

A.3.1: Assess Potential for Local/Regional Packages, & Coordinate Suppliers

Gold West Country: We plan on educating businesses on how to set up packages. We have a committee set up for this and will be planning a couple of workshops.

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: Packaging remains a primary goal for our integrated marketing effort. Due to the length of our VISITS implementation we have not been able to make much headway promoting packages but it will become a primary focus in the next two years.

A.3.2: Promote Off-Peak Weekend Getaway Packages/Events to “Nearby” Markets

Glacier Country: 2004-2006 Priority 3 - 03/04 NTA Night & Telemarketing/Fulfillment & Advertising & Direct Mail & Internet Development & Promotion - Fall Web Specials - Two Power of Packaging Seminars and follow up meetings working on this for Winter 2003/2004, Spring 2004 & Fall 2004 - Spring 2004 E-direct mail, press release, and web page promoting spring and honeymoon packages - New 05 Rack Brochure in Vanns.com shipments & on Washington Ferry System - Canadian Campaign with Travel Montana, Stay & Play, eh packages. 04/05 NTA Night, REI with Travel Montana and Meeting Planner Meeting in Minneapolis. 05/06 Press trip with Margaret Shakespeare writing about The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and FarmHands.

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue work with Cooperative Opportunities Committee comprised of regions/cvbs members to create opportunities for package promotion. Continue work with MSAA to promote winter packages via the winter website.

A.3.3: Capture More Pass-Through Travelers with Mini-Packages

Gold West Country: Gold West Country is addressing this with the workshop committee in teaching businesses how to put together packages. They will be on the Gold West Country Website.

A.4 Objective: Create New “Destinations” with Special Designations & Events

A.4.1: Work with MDT & Legislature to Implement Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program

Montana Department of Transportation: MDT enacted a rule in support of advancing the Scenic/Historic Byways program on December 10, 2004.

Montana Promotion Division:

Tourism Development & Education Program: Will continue communications with MT Department of Transportation regarding the development and implementation of the Scenic/Historic Byway Program (SHBP) over the next two years. Will continue offering the TD&E Program’s assistance in the implementation of this program.

Partnership Opportunities: Communities, regions, organizations and agencies interested in using the SHBP as a local development & marketing tool should contact MDT & Commerce’s Montana Promotion Division. Contact: Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development & Education Program, Montana Promotion Division, victor@visitmt.com, 406-841-2795.

A.4.2: Use Collaborative Efforts to Create Special Designation Areas

Glacier Country: 2006 Priority 5 - Sitting in on & helping where ever possible conference calls regarding the Northern Byway Scenic Loop as well as with the David Thompson Celebration with Canada - Libby Economic Dev. Meeting November 12, 2003 - Executive Director working with Bitterroot Birding Trail Group to set up new trail system - Executive Director sitting on Northern Byway Scenic Loop Board of Directors - Executive Director working with Ice Age Floods group. 04/05 Met twice with David Thompson, committees from surrounding states and Canada for 2007 Celebration; 3/06 Spring 2006 Executive Director and President as well as internet company to meet with each county and design a website for each county in Glacier Country to be hosted on Glacier Country website. Help develop loop tours into smaller areas of Glacier Country region.

Montana Promotion Division:

Tourism Development & Education Program: Over the next two years will continue working with organizations that have created new attractions by creating special tourism trail or loop tour designations or those who are interested in creating such special designation areas. Four specific projects the TD&E Program will continue to focus its efforts on include:

- Montana Dinosaur Trail: Efforts here will include adding qualified facilities to the trail's highlighted facilities, updating the trail's promotional materials (brochure & website), facilitating and coordinating publicity efforts, and assisting with the trail facilities organizational development.
- Hands of Harvest: The Craft-Heritage Trails of North Central Montana: Assist the Hands of Harvest Executive Committee with organizational development, promotional efforts, developing markets for trail member products, providing tourism education, and responding to other needs identified by the executive committee. As this trail develops, its executive committee and members are expected to provide mentor services to other organizations interested in developing cultural-heritage corridor projects.
- Montana Birding and Nature Trails: In coordination with the MTRI program, will continue offering networking, technical and appropriate financial assistance to current Montana birding trail projects -- Bitterroot Birding & Nature Trail Pilot Project and the Northeast Montana Birding & Nature Trail – and new projects that are presented.
- Beartooth All American Road: The TD&E Program will continue providing technical and financial support to the BAAR Corridor Management Organization. The organization's efforts are focused on improving interpretation and visitor services along the Montana & Wyoming portions of the highway which links Red Lodge & Cooke City.

Partnership Opportunities: Funding and technical resources will be needed for these special designation projects. A number of agencies and organizations are already assisting each of these efforts. The welcome mat is out for any others interested and willing to help these projects move forward as well as any new projects that request assistance. Contact: Victor Bjornberg, victor@visitmt.com, 406-841-2795 or Carol Crockett, ccrockett@mt.gov, 406-841-2796.

A.4.3: Seek Opportunities to Host National/International Sports Competitions**A.5 Objective: Enhance Montana's Winter Recreation Products/Services*****A.5.1: Refine Montana's Niche in the Destination Ski Market & Snowmobile Markets***

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The Flathead CVB operates a VIC in the Glacier Park Int'l Airport (Kalispell). The daily snow reports for both Blacktail Mountain and Big Mountain ski resorts are posted daily, with their brochures and trail maps also available for visitors.

The Flathead CVB creates a specialty brochure on snowmobiling in the Flathead Valley, which is produced & printed with bed tax funds. This brochure is distributed at the Airport VIC, through the call center for special requests and through FCVB members as well as area Chambers.

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue to focus on key markets to make a larger impact in a defined area rather than spending most of the marketing dollars available trying to reach a wider audience with less impact. Continue to develop and foster private partnerships and campaigns developed over the last several years. Work with the Sled the Rockies partners to re-vamp the snowmobile campaign.

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department will continue to work with our Consumer Marketing department to develop and host sites such as Sled the Rockies and support email marketing campaigns.

A.5.2: Package Skiing & Snowmobiling with Other Activities

A.5.3: Expand "Alternative" Winter Activities

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The Flathead CVB creates a specialty brochure on Cross Country Skiing in the Flathead Valley, which is produced & printed with bed tax funds. This brochure is distributed at the Airport VIC, through the call center for special requests and through FCVB members as well as area Chambers.

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department will continue to provide new content on our primary consumer and winter sites that will feature new winter content. Two examples of content partners are Montana Magazine and Falcon Press.

A.6 Objective: Attract More Meetings & Conventions to Montana

A.6.1: Refine Montana's Niche and "Brand" in the Meeting/Convention Market; Determine Feasibility of Enhanced Meeting & Convention Facilities

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau and Chamber: We continue to attend the annual ITME (Incentive Travel and Meeting Executive) Meeting in Chicago. This annual trade show allows us to keep Big Sky in the arena for meeting and

convention business with our vertical market competitors for incentive travel and meeting business. While Big Sky Resort has a more nationally recognized reputation as a meeting/convention destination, we feel that the CVBs participation in the meeting arena gives our smaller properties exposure as well.

Challenge: The clarification between Big Sky as the state organization vs. our community has been a big challenge. Educating meeting planners and group travel specialists as to our corporate amenities has been challenging as well. Keeping a presence in the meeting market helps to dispel the perception that Montana is not a meeting destination with advanced opportunities that are present in other major cities.

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The FCVB participated in a co-op program with Glacier Country to produce a high-quality meeting planner guide. The FCVB will follow up on all meeting planner leads generated by the FCVB, Glacier Country and Travel Montana. There will be a greater emphasis on the meetings/convention segment in the 2006-2007 FCVB marketing plan, to include a targeted trade show and co-op participation with Travel Montana (currently under development).

Partnership Opportunities: The partnership of Travel Montana, the tourism regions and the CVBs with a comprehensive plan is critical to the success of marketing Montana as a viable destination to the national marketplace, then allowing individual members to “close the deal”.

Glacier Country: 2003 Priority 3 & 2004 Priority 5 - 03/04 Travel Shows & Show Mailings - Created new meeting & convention fulfillment piece - mailed a direct mail piece specifically for meeting planners - attended affordable meetings & IT & ME trade shows - Email broadcast of Golf press release prior to Linda's attendance at affordable meetings national & IT & ME trade shows in September 2004 - need to create new '05 marketing piece - CVBS & all meeting hotels to meet in winter '05 - creation of new Meeting Planners Meeting Guide with CVBS and meeting hotels - creation of new website for meeting planners. Participated in conference call with Travel Montana and meeting hotels from around the state to determine what to do for the state of meetings and conferences. Planning Meeting Planner trip of early summer 2006 and meeting. Media press trips in early summer of 2006.

Montana Promotion Division:

Meetings & Conventions Program: Travel Montana is currently working towards a cooperative marketing plan to include Regions/CVB's and suppliers. The plan will allow these entities to buy in to trade show participation as well advertising. We hope to start in FY07.

A.6.2: Conduct Training on the Needs & Trends of Meeting/Convention Markets

A.6.3: Use Local Historical/Cultural Attractions to Enhance Venue Offerings

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: The 2005 Third Annual Statewide Preservation Workshop was held in Billings with attendees from Montana and Wyoming. MHS hosted annual history conference in Helena, partnered with the community in hosting Western Rendezvous of Art; partnered with Ancient Hibernians for rededication of Capitol's T.F. Meagher statue.

Vision (Activities for 2006-7): 2006 Fourth Annual Preservation Workshop. Participate in the Museums Association of Montana conference, Fort Benton. Advertise Montana through MHS magazine, *Montana The Magazine of Western History*.

Partnership Opportunity (Need if lacking): Montana Travel Promotion and *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. Over half of "Montana" readers are from outside the state. The magazine would be a good mechanism to promote tourism to both in-state and out-of-state readers, especially ads with a historic emphasis.

A.7 Objective: Enhance System of Tracking, Analysis & Information Dissemination about Tourism Trends, & Implications for Stakeholders

A.7.1: Continue Strategic Research about Resident & Nonresident Travelers

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Develop marketing plans which include strategic research on these markets for both winter and warm season.

A.7.2: Regularly Measure Montanans' Opinions about Tourism & Recreation

Custer Country: We continue to employ the services of MARS Stout to receive and track inquiries from potential visitors. This information is documented to us on a monthly basis and is used to help determine areas that should be pinpointed for future promotions, advertising and Trade Show attendance.

A.7.3: Conduct Regular Conversion Research to Measure Results of Marketing Efforts

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Conduct Warm Season magazine conversion study. Conduct a key market conversion study on the Minneapolis market following the FY06 winter key market campaign.

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department has plans to conduct a new Web site conversion study in FY 60/07. The results will be shared with our marketing partners.

A.7.4: Establish a Central “Clearinghouse” for Data Collection, Analysis & Reporting

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: MPD’s Electronic Marketing department will continue to utilize and enhance our industry intranet to disseminate tourism reports and data. One specific goal is to redesign and augment our intranet site to place all information, reports and forms specific to our state sponsored entities (Regions, CVBs) so they will be accessible to all and the information logically organized and easily viewed from one single source. Additionally, we will use the new VISITS CRM system to analyze and report on the success of our marketing campaigns and the demographics of our inquirers.

U.S. Forest Service: Will continue its visitor use monitoring surveys (NVUM) on three national forests in Montana in 2006 and continue to further refine the analysis of the data to gain a better understanding of the recreation users of the national forests and their contribution to the tourism industry in the State.

A.7.5: Create a Statewide “Baseline” Database of Tourism & Recreation Assets

A.7.6: Enhance Data-Gathering Systems at Attractions & VICs

A.7.7: Upgrade Lodging Tax Reporting Systems at Montana Department of Revenue

Montana Promotion Division:

Industry Services: Participate in ongoing discussions with the Department of Revenue on MPD’s needs and provide support and information as appropriate to fine-tune the IRIS system.

A.7.8: Coordinate with the Private Sector for Enhanced Tracking/Reporting

Montana Promotion Division:

Industry Services: Collected visitation figures at more locations year round instead of just the May through September time period. Provide visitation figures on MPD’s intranet site.

A.8 Objective: Create a Connected System to Share Information & Resources

Gold West Country: Gold West Country is going to do a newsletter to help get the information out to businesses and tourism constituents.

Partnership Opportunities: Many businesses that benefit directly from tourists are not involved. Would like to see brochures or information on one piece that includes all the public lands for people to go (hiking trails, camping places, fishing access).

A.8.1: Create a Tourism & Recreation Listserv to Share Information

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department will support this initiative in the next two years by sharing our technical infrastructure with our partners in the tourism industry.

A.8.2: Create a Database of Tourism/Recreation Technical & Funding Resources

A.8.3: Share Information about State/Regional Advertising Plans to Facilitate Coordination

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue updating appropriate parties on consumer marketing advertising initiatives as well cooperative opportunities in a timely manner.

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department will continue to utilize and enhance our industry intranet to disseminate tourism reports and data. One specific goal is to redesign and augment our intranet site to place all information, reports and forms specific to our state sponsored entities (Regions, CVBs) so they will be accessible to all and the information logically organized and easily viewed from one single source. Additionally, we will use the new VISITS CRM system to analyze and report on the success of our marketing campaigns and the demographics of our inquirers.

Industry Services: Due to staffing changes we were unable to accomplish this last year; however, it is our intention that following the October TAC meeting, all Regional/CVB finalized advertising plans be compiled and provided to all the Regions/CVBs and MPD Consumer Marketing staff.

A.8.4: Enhance Sharing of Tourism & Recreation Photo Libraries

Glacier Country: 2006 Priority 4 - In the process of creating a photo library - Photo committee meets July 26, 2004 - Creating a web based database for writers

and members to use and buy photos - Library is continually being updated - Custom photography shoot scheduled for 2005 - new trade show booth photography added in 2005 photos from Travel Montana and regional photographers used. New trade show booth finished in Jan. 06. Winter photo shoot scheduled in early 2006.

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: We will be working with MPD's staff photographer to host and catalog an extensive library of tourism and recreation photos.

B. Managing the Use of Assets

B.1 Objective: Seek Balance Between Asset Protection & Visitor/Business Needs

Bureau of Land Management: The BLM encourages and supports partnerships with the tourism industry promoting the historic Lewis and Clark Trail and Signature Events, Fishing Events, Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace programs and the Ft. Benton and Pompeys Pillar Visitor Centers. In addition, the BLM promotes special outreach projects like Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration: 2003-2006, National Public Lands Day, Fishing Week, National Trails Day and local community events. The protection of resources and visitor safety are met by collaborative/cooperative law enforcement agreements with other federal, state and local governmental agencies. The use of volunteers, campground hosts and contracted firms also assists in managing visitor and business needs, regulatory compliance and resource protection.

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): Montana is rich in resources upon which our residents and visitors base their recreational activities. MTRI will address recreation opportunities and asset protection through its member agencies' land-use planning processes and statutorily required planning efforts.

B.1.1: Compile an Inventory/Evaluation of Natural/Historic/Cultural Assets & Facilities

Glacier Country: 2003 Priority 5 - 03/04 Advertising & Promotion - Glacier Country board completed list at January Board Retreat which is being used in the design of the 2004 travel guide. Jan. 2006 asked board members for 3 hidden jewels in each of their counties to be used in future Travel Guides, press trips, etc.

B.1.2: Select Management Options that Emphasize Balanced Resident & Nonresident Use

B.1.3: Develop Systems of Allocated Use in Sensitive Areas

B.1.4: Evaluate Licensing for All Guided Recreation Activities that Involve Safety Risk

B.1.5: Address Motorized vs. Non-Motorized Recreation User Conflicts

B.1.6: Address Invasive Species Problems through Partnerships & Educational Programs

Custer Country: Custer Country makes information about such invasive species as the Zebra Mussel available at out-of-state Trade Shows to alert travelers of the

dangers and possibilities of importing new, environmentally harmful species to Montana.

Missouri River Country:

VISION

- Missouri River Country will plan to have an Educational Forum to educate on Aquatic Nuisance Species brought in to the lake. We will also inform landowners of the noxious weed problems. We want to make the public aware of the dangers that noxious weeds and Aquatic Nuisance Species can do to the fish, wildlife and birds.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Missouri River Country will partner with Outfitters, Guides, Landowners, Anglers, and Hunters to increase the awareness of the hazards that diseases can do to our fish and wildlife. We don't want to lose the wonderful fishing, hunting and wildlife watching opportunities that Missouri River Country has to offer.

CHALLENGES

- Missouri River Country faces the challenges of people not obeying the laws to protect our lakes and wildlife.

B.1.7: Encourage Appropriate Use of Land Conservancy Programs

B.2: Objective: Address Access Issues on Public & Private Lands & Waters

B.2.1: Support Implementation of Strategies to Improve Access to Public Lands & Waters

Custer Country: Custer Country Executive Director has been appointed to the Region 7 Fish, Wildlife and Parks Citizens Advisory Committee, which was formed to help evaluate current rules, provide input from the general public about rules changes.

Missouri River Country:

VISION

- Missouri River Country is planning to have a meeting with Federal Agencies to discuss the need for increased access to recreational sites. Roads have been closed making it difficult to get to ice fishing sites, lakes, and hunting areas. We will inform these agencies of the importance of access to promote increased visitation and tourism to our area.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Missouri River Country will partner with Federal Agencies, such as FWP, Corps of Engineers, and USFW/CMR. We will encourage these agencies to work with us to keep roads open and allow access to recreational sites and promote tourism.

CHALLENGES

- The challenges that Missouri River Country will encounter will be with the Federal Agencies to see the importance of keeping access to the recreational sites. It will be important for visitors to have easy access and capabilities to reach their destination and enjoy their activity, so they will want to have a return visit and inform others of their experience in Missouri River Country.

B.2.2: Expand the Block Management Program for Access to Private Lands

B.2.3: Use Special Groups to Facilitate Discussion of Access to Public/Private Lands & Waters

Custer Country: The Region 7 Citizens Advisory Committee, of which Custer Country is a part, is designed to address these problems. Commercial use and rules for same are two of the important issues facing the Region 7 CAC.

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners: FGP is working with the City of Whitefish in a public-private partnership on the "Trail Runs Through It Project" to develop a recreational loop trail around Whitefish Lake, traversing through state, federal and private lands. This plan is intended to maintain and expand public access while implementing the pro-access, pro-conservation neighborhood plan developed for 13,000 acres of state-owned public land around Whitefish. Associated with the trail are plans to maintain surrounding open lands as working forests and high-quality wildlife habitat with public access, so that they are not chopped up into subdivisions, ranchettes and other developments with no-trespassing signs. The Trail Master Plan should be completed by end of 2006 with implementation to begin in 2007. DNRC, Forest Service, and Fish, Wildlife and Parks are partners in this collaborative effort. FGP and the City signed a cooperative MOU in Fall 2005.

B.3 Objective: Develop an Enhanced Transportation System in Montana

Bureau of Land Management: BLM's National Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Strategy and National Mountain Bike Strategy for improving the way the road and trail systems are managed on public lands is an ongoing program. These strategies integrate the BLM's recreation, engineering and maintenance programs, commercial users, and multi-resource programs. This is being accomplished by BLM providing consistent public access signing and information including websites and all print media. The BLM, United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) meet twice per year to coordinate the Interagency OHV Team and collaborate on travel management issues and monitor the effectiveness of the joint OHV Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Currently, the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, Miles City Field Office, Malta Field Office, and the Butte Field Office are working on travel management plans.

Montana Department of Transportation:

- The Mosby rest area on MT 200 opened late summer 2005. The Anaconda rest area on I-90 is scheduled for letting in Feb. 2007. Several rest areas are in the environmental process or under design: on the I-15 corridor at Lima, Dearborn and Boulder, on the I-90 corridor at Bearmouth and Battlefield, on I-94 at Fort Keogh, on MT-3 at Harlowton, MT-200 at Flowing Wells and on US-2 at Glasgow.
- Director Lynch rescinded the policy on winter closing of most MDT rest areas. All rest areas able to function during the winter season will now remain open to enhance services to travelers.
- MDT is continuing to improve its rest area maintenance practices by improving caretaker-contracting procedures. The 2005 Legislature approved additional funding to maintain or improve existing City Park Rest Areas. MDT has solicited interest from the ten oldest City Park Rest Areas. There are some basic requirements for participation and parameters on eligible costs.
- MDT continues its efforts to upgrade and standardize information displays at all rest areas.

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will monitor its agencies' travel management operations and maintenance programs to ensure sustainability and enhanced recreation opportunities.

B.3.1: Advance Implementation of Montana's Rest Area Strategy**Montana Promotion Division:**

Tourism Development & Education Program: Work with MDT to provide up-to-date traveler information at rest area facilities. Continue to identify partnerships opportunities for staffed visitor information centers.

B.3.2: Continue to Improve Roads & Bridges; Address Maintenance Backlog

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners: A top priority for NPCA is to secure full funding for our national parks, including erasing the maintenance backlog. Reconstruction of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway is an important objective. We were instrumental in securing a \$50 million earmark for the Sun Road in the recent transportation bill.

B.3.3: Work with Air Carriers/Airports to Identify Needs & Enhance Air Service

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau and Chamber: We continue to work with the Gallatin Field Airport representatives and private sector investors to address the issue of air service to Big Sky/Bozeman. Most of this work is done through partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky Resort, Moonlight Basin, and Spanish Peaks and using Resort Tax funds for the promotion of guaranteed flights

from direct air cities. Future guarantees and further/continued air service strategies are continually explored.

Challenge: Increased air service will continue to pose challenges, especially considering the decrease on a statewide level of overall air service to major Montana airports.

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The FCVB office is located at the Glacier Int'l Airport (Kalispell), which provides the opportunity for frequent conversations with the airlines and the Airport Director regarding air service. This information is then passed along to FCVB members, whom are all eager and anxious to help in any manner. To date, the Airport Director has discouraged members to collectively establish revenue guarantee contracts with the airlines, but rather independently contact the customer service departments of the airlines, as needed with complaints, etc. The Glacier Int'l Airport is a member of the FCVB.

Partnership Opportunities: A stronger partnership with the tourism community and the Dept. of Transportation (on a state and national level) is needed. As air service is vital to the economic growth of our communities.

Montana Department of Transportation: MDT is sponsoring a research effort that addresses this issue. The draft of "Montana Air Service: Opportunities and Challenges" was submitted November 2005. This draft report analyzes the challenges facing Montana's commercial service airports and outlines the opportunities for air service and air cargo development. Realistic air service and air cargo opportunities are recommended in the form of a state marketing strategy. Statewide recommendations include developing a statewide air service committee, funding an air service development program, providing airport assistance, and creating a policy statement. Individual airport recommendations include establishing local catalyst and air service task force, working with current carriers, educating the community, and pursuing new air service opportunities.

B.3.4: Advocate for Passenger Rail Service

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: AMTRAK is a member of the FCVB and vital to the economic stability of tourism in the Flathead Valley, bringing daily passengers from both the East and the West on the Empire Builder. The FCVB distributes their travel guide in the Empire Builder and will soon have distribution in the Whitefish Depot. AMTRAK brochures and promotion materials (currently a FREE Companion Fare) are distributed at the Airport VIC.

Montana Department of Transportation:

- MDT coordinates with Amtrak, the Congressional Delegation and others to facilitate increased use of rail and preserve existing service levels.

- MDT's policy is to ensure that Montana's interests in maintaining current and expanding passenger rail service are addressed in any national decision-making concerning increased Amtrak service.

B.3.5: Work with Car Rental Agencies to Identify Needs & Enhance Services

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The FCVB has three members who are Car Rental Agencies. The President of the FCVB is the manager of one of these agencies. Frequent conversations occur regarding customer needs and how our members can better enhance their needs. Currently the cost of fuel is the biggest concern.

B.3.6: Identify Opportunities for Transit/Shuttle Transportation at Major Destinations

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau and Chamber: There has been a Big Sky Transit Authority formed under the larger umbrella of the Big Sky Transportation District in Big Sky. This group has been working with consulting companies on a national and statewide level to provide year round general public transit service in Big Sky and, eventually, to and from the Bozeman/West Yellowstone communities as well. The submitted plan will be the basis for applying for federal funding in the future to expand the community's overall transportation challenges.

Challenge: Funding remains the biggest challenge for increasing our transportation in Big Sky and between Big Sky – Bozeman – West Yellowstone. Ridership numbers continue to be a challenge as well; better ridership would lend itself to better transportation scheduling, thus cutting costs; however that pattern has been difficult to improve.

Montana Department of Transportation:

- MDT is exploring opportunities to expand intercity bus service in Montana including corridors serving major destinations.
- Big Sky, Bozeman, and numerous other communities are developing new or expanded general public transit systems with assistance from MDT.

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners:

NPCA is working closely with Glacier National Park and local gateway community leaders to develop an integrated transit system inside and outside the park to enhance the visitor experience, reduce dependence on private vehicles, and reduce congestion and parking jams. Glacier has approved a transit plan as part of the Sun Road rehabilitation project.

B.3.7: Enhance Montana's Trail System

Custer Country: Custer Country is working with a number of groups in the region to help develop new birding, biking and walking trails.

Missouri River Country:

VISION

- Missouri River Country plans to investigate opportunities to develop nature trails in communities in Missouri River Country. We will invite trail leaders to our meetings to learn more about creating trails. We will promote the nature trails that are already established. The nature trails will include hiking, biking, rollerblading and walking pets. The more enjoyable activities for tourists to do will leave a bigger impact on the local economy.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Missouri River Country will look for partners to help create nature trails. We will try to get communities involved to establish and promote more trails in Missouri River Country.

CHALLENGES

- It will be a challenge to get communities involved in creating trails. Missouri River Country will have to work hard to show the economical impact and increased tourism to areas that have trails. We will have to promote the trails to see the benefits.

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners:

FGP is working with the City of Whitefish in a public-private partnership on the "Trail Runs Through It Project" to develop a recreational loop trail around Whitefish Lake, traversing through state, federal and private lands. This plan is intended to maintain and expand public access while implementing the pro-access, pro-conservation neighborhood plan developed for 13,000 acres of state-owned public land around Whitefish. Associated with the trail are plans to maintain surrounding open lands as working forests and high-quality wildlife habitat with public access, so that they are not chopped up into subdivisions, ranchettes and other developments with no-trespassing signs. The Trail Master Plan should be completed by end of 2006 with implementation to begin in 2007. DNRC, Forest Service, and Fish, Wildlife and Parks are partners in this collaborative effort. FGP and the City signed a cooperative MOU in Fall 2005.

B.4 Objective: Create a Comprehensive & Interactive "System" of Visitor Information & Interpretation

Bureau of Land Management: The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, the Recreation One-Stop Service and Volunteer.gov websites and partnering with non-profit cooperative associations are means to enhancing visitor services and informational needs nationally.

The Montana BLM is promoting partnerships in recreation with FWP in the Blackfoot River and along the Chain of Lakes/ Hauser Lake areas by sharing maintenance, park and law enforcement staffs.

The Clark on the Yellowstone – Signature Event being held July 22-25, 2006, at Pompeys Pillar National Monument and in Billings is a large multi-partner event. Partners working actively on this event include: Yellowstone County, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Montana American Indian tribal governments, Montana Dept. of Commerce, Pompeys Pillar Historical Association and many federal, state and local governmental agencies.

Montana Department of Transportation:

- All new MDT rest areas are “wired” during construction to allow for future electronic capabilities, i.e. electronic kiosks.
- MDT continues its efforts to upgrade and standardize information displays at all rest areas.
- MDT is considering offering WiFi services at state maintained rest areas. The department is looking into a variety of strategies although this is a challenging project due to geography and the remote locations of some of the rest areas.

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI agencies will improve the quality of visitor experiences through coordinated programs of enhanced interpretation and education.

B.4.1: Enhance State Rest Areas & VICs with Montana Highlights

Custer Country: Custer Country continues to provide funding to VICs in the region, including State-funded and locally-funded.

Missouri River Country:

VISION

- There are five Rest Areas throughout Missouri River Country. There are several that don't have a kiosk. Missouri River Country would like to see them all have a kiosk to put Missouri River Country information in. We will promote our popular attractions to extend the visitors stays in Missouri River Country to travelers stopping at these Rest Areas.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Missouri River Country will partner with the Montana Department of Transportation to get a kiosk at all the Rest Areas in Missouri River Country. We will supply these areas with Missouri River Country information.

CHALLENGES

- The challenge will be the cost of the kiosk and finding the funding to install them at the Rest Areas that don't have them.

Montana Promotion Division:

Tourism Development & Education Program: Strengthen the VIC Display Case Program by working closely with partners to identify Made in Montana products to feature.

Partnership Opportunity: Producers or sellers of Made in Montana Products in the area of the 9 state-supported VICs interested in displaying products in these displays should contact Carol Crockett in Travel Montana's TD&E Program, 406-841-2796, ccrockett@mt.gov, or the local VIC offices. The VICs contact information is available on Travel Montana's Intranet site at this link: www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/visitorcenters

B.4.2: Educate Visitors about Ethics and Responsibilities on Public & Private Lands

Custer Country: The Custer Country Guide includes a large section on Montana hunting and fishing regulations and the responsibilities of those who use public and private lands. There is a strong reference in the Guide to the philosophy which states: "Leave only footprints".

U.S. Forest Service: Will participate in the remaining L&C Bicentennial events in Montana that will involve educational booths that hand out materials promoting responsible use of public and private lands. FS would support an MTRI booth at Clark on the Yellowstone to hand out the L&C Focus Team stewardship poster and other materials if the Working Group wants to do that.

B.4.3: Complete Implementation of Statewide Lewis & Clark Interpretive Sign Strategy

U.S. Forest Service: Will complete an inventory of the interpretive signs installed for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and would support a review of the strategy to determine how well the design guidelines in the strategy were implemented and would support the development of an interagency strategy for monitoring and maintaining this investment.

B.4.4: Provide Professionally Researched Interpretive Programs & Facilities for Visitors

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: MHS hosted Native American Heritage Day; the museum offers multiple new and continuing exhibits; MHS offers free weekly public programs and public events; partnership with the Western History Association; promoted *Montana The Magazine of Western History* and Press Publications to its 1500 members. Ellen Baumler and Philip Aaberg worked together to produce an audio book of *Beyond Spirit Tailings*. This collaboration by two renowned Montana artists celebrates the uniqueness of Montana's ghostly past.

Vision (Activities for 2006-7): Continue to publish press books of local and regional significance Opening of the Nenuk exhibit September, 2006.

B.5 Objective: Improve Statewide System of Highway Signs

B.5.1: Develop/Implement Sign Guidelines for Services, Attractions & Businesses

Custer Country: Custer Country is closely monitoring the effort to improve the ability of local communities to post welcome and informational signage on state highway property. Written comments in support of these changes will be forwarded to the Montana Department of Transportation.

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: Jon Axline, MDT, presented *Obtaining Brown Highway Signs for Your Historic District* at the 2005 Preservation Workshop, Billings.

B.5.2: Encourage Statewide Adoption of Visitor-Friendly Symbol Signs

B.5.3: Address Appropriate Use/Placement of Billboards While Maintaining Landscapes

B.6 Objective: Assist Communities to Enhance Facilities/Services for Tourism Development while Respecting Community Values, Heritage & Character

B.6.1: Continue and Enhance Community Tourism Assessment (CTAP) & Tourism Infrastructure Improvement (TIIP) Programs

Custer Country: Custer Country supports these efforts through TM cooperative marketing grants and with expenditures from Custer Country private funds.

Russell Country: Russell Country will continue to promote CTAP and TIIP and encourage our communities to apply for these programs. Both of these programs are discussed at our board meetings and also when executive director Gayle Fisher is speaking at different chambers or community groups. Partnerships will involve any communities or counties that wish to apply for these programs.

B.6.2: Encourage Review of City/County/Tribal Infrastructure & Public Services

B.6.3: Enhance Heritage/Cultural Facilities & Attractions to Meet Visitor Needs

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: MHS (SHPO) hosted the 2005 Preservation Workshop in Billings. Mark Baumler serves on the Governor's

Historical and Cultural Advisory Council and the Montana Heritage Commission. Ellen Baumler serves on the Virginia City Preservation and Interpretation Committee. MHS hosted annual history conference in Helena. MHS participated in the Museums Association of Montana conference, Glasgow. National Register signs continue to enhance and promote community heritage throughout the state. MHS Press published Ellen Baumler's *Beyond Spirit Tailings: Montana's Mysteries, Ghosts, and Haunted Places* and MDT historian Jon Axline's *Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860–1956*, both of interest to many Montana communities and promote their heritage resources. Secured monies from the '05 legislative session allowing MHS to move forward in our efforts to build the Montana History Center. Marketing Committee increased national and state advertising efforts with ads in AAA Magazine, two highway billboards, and promos in movie theaters. Partnered with Amtrak and Travel Montana to promote and distribute Montana The Magazine of Western History and promotional brochures and coupons nation-wide.

Vision (Activities for 2006-7): MHS (SHPO) is presenting sessions on Heritage Tourism and Montana Main Street at the 2006 Preservation Workshop, Deer Lodge. Continued participation in heritage activities. Encourage the Western History Association to hold annual conference in Montana. Continuation of the National Register sign program. Press publications will include titles that showcase the Treasure State, among them *Cowboy Trout: Western Fly Fishing As If It Matters*; *A Guide to Historic Bozeman*, one of the Montana Mainstreet series; *Copper Chorus: Mining, Politics, and the Montana Press, 1889–1959*; *The Definitive Montana Place Names Book*; and *Border to Border: A History of Montana Quilts and Quiltmakers*. MHS is a partner in the planned '07 cattle drive; Lewis and Clark Exhibit will open September '06; actively involved in Main Street revitalization activities across the state; continue to publish articles and books of public interest about Montana and its historical legacy;

Partnership Opportunity: Participation of all state agencies and decision makers on better management of state-owned properties.

B.6.4: Encourage Community Participation in the National Main Street Program

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: Rolene Schliesman promoted the Main Street program as CLG coordinator and presented at the 2005 Preservation Workshop.

Vision (Activities for 2006-7): A session on Montana Main Street at the 2006 Preservation Workshop. Rolene Schliesman, SHPO, will serve as a member of the Montana Main Street Selection Committee.

B.6.5: Encourage Communities to Use Strategic Planning & Development Tools

C. Creating Teams

C.1 Objective: Identify Opportunities to Link Agriculture with Tourism

C.1.1: Create Mechanisms for Tourism Businesses to Use Montana Agricultural Products

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners:

Flathead Gateway Partners is providing administrative and strategic support to Farmhands, a local-agriculture advocacy group that is also working with the Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau. Farmhands has developed a map and other programs to educate visitors about local agricultural businesses and to encourage local eating establishments to use local food.

C.1.2: Enhance Existing Programs with Focus on Tourist Markets

C.1.3: Develop Cooperative Marketing Campaigns between Agriculture & Tourism

Glacier Country: 2003 Priority 4 - Cooperative funding of FarmHands maps - Co-op projects open to any non-profit organization - Hosted Birding Press Trip in June 2003 - 04 Direct Mail Sweepstakes contains small prizes to be given away weekly with gifts from each of Glacier Country's counties many of the prize baskets contain local agricultural products - teas, huckleberry candies, etc. In exchange for the donations each contributor will be given a link on Glacier Country's web site - added farmer's markets and savoring the tastes to our 2005 and 2006 travel guide to promote agritourism - Dec. 2004 Travel Guide Press Release talks about agritourism. 05/06 Press trip with Margaret Shakespeare writing about The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and FarmHands.

Montana Promotion Division:

Electronic Marketing: MPD's Electronic Marketing department will continue to work with the Department of Ag to promote and host the Montana Culinary Excellence Awards on our primary consumer Web site visitmt.com.

C.1.4: Educate Visitors about Montana Agriculture & Ranching

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners:

Flathead Gateway Partners is providing administrative and strategic support to Farmhands, a local-agriculture advocacy group that is also working with the Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau. Farmhands has developed a map and other programs to educate visitors about local agricultural businesses and to encourage local eating establishments to use local food.

Russell Country: The Russell Country board of directors and executive director will seek ways to showcase agriculture and ranching with familiarization trips, our annual travel planner and by working with members of the media one on one. Potential partners include Travel Montana, agriculture and ranching associations and the media.

C.2 Objective: Create Partnerships to Address Asset Management Needs

Bureau of Land Management: BLM will expand and pursue additional partnerships in order to provide funding and resource management support of public lands. The Montana BLM has an active partnership the Montana State University for the Undaunted Stewardship Program working with private landowners along public lands supporting the historic Lewis and Clark Trail. New partnerships in 2006 include: Montana's FWP supporting cooperative administration of commercial permitting along the Blackfoot River, a partnership with the City of Ft. Benton, the River and Plains Society and the BLM for management of the new visitor center for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and existing city visitor center, and with Yellowstone County and other local groups for the July 2006 Signature Event at Pompeys Pillar National Monument. In addition, we have existing partnerships with FWP for trail and OHV grants (SAFETEA-LU) and projects, Resource Advisory Councils (RAC) volunteers assisting BLM with management plans, and working with various local communities Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration, recreational and sport clubs, and other federal agencies.

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will encourage and sustain collaborative partnerships through its agencies' community liaisons, volunteer opportunities and public outreach and awareness events.

C.2.1: Identify Opportunities for Partnerships & Funding to Address Asset Needs

National Parks Conservation Association and Flathead Gateway Partners: A priority for NPCA in the next couple years is to enhance local, national and international appreciation for the Crown of the Continent region, anchored by the world's first international peace park, including wildlands and gateway communities in southeastern British Columbia, southwestern Alberta, and northern Montana. Strategies will work to support community-based collaborative efforts to maintain and enhance conservation, recreational and educational values and activities. To help residents, businesses and visitors to appreciate this region beyond borders, we'll try to promote the idea of a "two-nation vacation," and support fledgling nature-based tourism efforts, such as bird watching festivals in Choteau and Bigfork, Crowsnest Pass and Fernie.

U.S. Forest Service: Will continue to explore ways to partner with other agencies who deliver interpretive programming to develop an interpretive and visitor

services training center of excellence and network through the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Great Falls.

C.2.2: Evaluate Agency Regulations & Policies to Determine Differences in Priorities/Programs

C.2.3: Encourage Citizens to Volunteer for Asset Maintenance Projects

C.3 Objective: Increase Awareness & Utilization of Business Assistance Programs among Tourism & Recreation Businesses

C.3.1: Provide Information about Business Assistance to Tourism & Recreation Businesses

Custer Country: Through emails, newsletters and press releases, Custer Country informs its members of these business assistance programs.

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: As the Executive Director, Dori Hamilton sits on the Board of Directors for the NW Montana BEAR Program (Business Expansion and Retention). This provides her with the knowledge of numerous business assistance programs in the region, which are then shared with members, as needed. A future goal will be for Dori to execute BEAR interviews with FCVB members to better establish their individual business needs and make referrals to these business assistance programs.

C.3.2: Offer Entrepreneurship & Management Training for Tourism & Recreation Businesses

Custer Country: We strongly support Super Host training and encourage businesses and civic groups in Custer Country to participate.

C.3.3: Address Workforce Issues & Training Programs

C.3.4: Encourage Financial Lending to Provide Capital for Tourism & Recreation Businesses

C.4 Objective: Identify Business Opportunities to Serve Visitors on Public Lands

C.4.1: Identify Opportunities for New or Enhanced Tourism/Recreation Services

C.4.2: Discuss Ways to Simplify Regulations & Permitting Processes While Protecting Assets

C.4.3: Investigate Contracting of Maintenance Operations to Private Businesses

C.5 Objective: Enhance Montana's "Edu-Structure" to Support Tourism

C.5.1: Expand Education Programs for Tourism & Recreation Careers

C.5.2: Develop a Staff Training Program for VICs

Montana Promotion Division:

Tourism Development & Education Program: TD&E staff will conduct staff training sessions at each of the 9 VICs at the beginning the May-Sept. 2006 contract period. The training will include awareness of the statewide, region and community information sources for tourism & recreation information - print & electronic; internet and computer literacy; VIC program policies and contractor responsibilities.

C.5.3: Provide Regional Familiarization Tours for State/Regional/Tribal/Local Tourism Staff

Montana Promotion Division:

Industry Services: Due to the delay in implementing VISITS this was not accomplished in 2005; however, it is our intention to provide fams and other training opportunities to the MARS Stout agents to have them gain more familiarity with the recreational opportunities of Montana.

C.5.4: Include Educational Presentations at Tourism & Recreation Meetings & Events

Montana Promotion Division:

Industry Services: Provided opportunities for strategic plan discussions and other informational topics at TAC and Region/CVB meetings. These included topics such as:

- What MPD offers for electronic marketing opportunities to the Regions/CVBs
- Proposed changes in our Meeting and Convention program
- Inviting area legislators to the TAC meetings
- Air Service Challenges
- Rest Area Plans

C.5.5: Work with MSU to Create "Tourism Extension Agents" in Each Tourism Region

C.6 Objective: Build Funding Partnerships to Leverage Existing Dollars

C.6.1: Encourage Strategic Partnerships for Cooperative Project Funding

Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau: The FCVB has the smallest budget of all the CVB's in the state. To participate in many marketing opportunities, the FCVB will establish cooperative programs with members (AAA & SkyWest Magazine), as well as participate in co-op opportunities with Glacier Country (LA Times Trade Show & Seattle Trade Show). Regrettably the co-op opportunities with Travel Montana are often cost prohibited for the FCVB.

Montana Promotion Division:

Publications Program: Create public land recreation map with MTRI, if funding is available.

Russell Country: Russell Country will continue to include a line item in our annual marketing plan for Cooperative Marketing projects. Our partners are all nonprofits and government agencies in Russell Country that market tourism.

C.6.2: Identify Opportunities to Pool Public & Private Marketing Dollars

Montana Promotion Division:

Consumer Marketing: Continue work with Cooperative Opportunities Committee comprised of regions/cvbs members to create cooperative advertising opportunities in the future. Continue to foster private/public partnership relationships from past campaigns such as with REI, The North Face, etc.

C.7 Objective: Develop Additional Funding Sources for Tourism & Recreation

Bureau of Land Management: The BLM is actively involved in promoting recreational activities on public lands in Montana. This in turn assists Montana's tourism industry and local communities. BLM has supported projects and the funding of 1 million dollars for the Undaunted Stewardship Program which supports private individuals with recreational based historic sites in 2004 - 2006. BLM through its Challenge Cost Share program will fund several partnerships in 2006:

- Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Events for 2006
- Travel planning and management in the Butte Field Office
- A river ranger for the Blackfoot River to assist MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Partnership with the State of Montana to manage permits on the Blackfoot River
- Montana Continental Divide Trail work in the Dillon Field Office
- Fishing Derbies throughout Montana with FWP and local communities
- Chain of Lakes Improvements supporting local communities

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will continue to work within the guidelines of its Memorandum of Understanding to plan and fund

mutually beneficial tourism and recreation projects that serve the needs of residents and visitors, both national and international.

C.7.1: Consider Selective &/or Local Option Taxes on Goods & Services Used by Tourists

C.7.2: Evaluate Expansion of User Fees for Public Facility Recreation

C.7.3: Encourage Attractions to Generate more Revenue from Visitors

Montana Historical Society: 2005 Accomplishments: Efforts to build the Montana History Center will generate new tourism for Montana.

Vision (Activities for 2006-7): Continue efforts to plan the Montana History Center, offer quality exhibits and services to the public, continue to advertise and promote Montana's historical legacy through *Montana The Magazine of Western History* and Press books.

C.7.4: Develop Local/Regional Revenue-Sharing Visitor Packages

C.7.5: Create a "Montana Visitor Passport" Program, with a Portion of Proceeds from Passport Sales used to Support Local/Regional Tourism Efforts

C.7.6: Seek Additional Revenue for the Block Management Program

C.8 Objective: Develop Partnerships to Facilitate Implementation of Strategic Plan

C.8.1: Conduct Workshops in Each Region to Discuss Plan Implementation

C.8.2: Conduct Training for Region/CVB Boards of Directors & Members

C.8.3: Obtain Funding to Enhance Regional Tourism Organizations

C.8.4: Coordinate Strategic Plan Implementation & Monitoring through Dept. of Commerce

C.8.5: Form an Implementation Team of Private/Public/Tribal/Nonprofit Representatives

C.8.6: Coordinate Implementation with Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

C.8.7: Develop a User-Friendly System of Annual Reporting on Status of Strategic Plan

Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan Accomplishments

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau and Chamber

- Create balance and partnerships between Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky CVB, Big Sky Resort, Moonlight Basin, and other private sector businesses.
- Launched second successful advertising campaign to promote direct flights into Bozeman/Big Sky from Atlanta, GA. Partnered with Big Sky Resort, Moonlight Basin, and Spanish Peaks Club. Chamber contracted directly with Delta Airlines.
- Continued work on Strategic Plan for Big Sky; addressing most challenging areas for our community. Extensive work in Community & Infrastructure, researching possibilities of incorporation.
- Continue working on Publicity campaign, which focuses on niche markets/special events/shoulder season attractions in Big Sky Chamber of Commerce.
- Continue to educate meeting planners about opportunities for smaller meetings/incentive travel in Montana. Considerable follow up with contacts, leads through Travel Montana as well.

Gold West Country

- Did a visitor survey to get more information on our tourists.
- Enhanced the website to include video clips of attractions in certain areas. Added a kid's site. Are working on downloadable maps.
- Worked more on partnerships with marketing. Have done consumer advertising, travel shows, package deals, and reciprocated information to different partners.

Missouri River Country

Promoting Special Events

- In 2005 Missouri River Country promoted several Special Events. We participated in the Grand Opening of the Fort Peck Interpretive Center on May 7, 2005. We printed posters to advertise the event and distributed them throughout Montana and North Dakota. Missouri River Country set up their trade show booth in the front part of the Interpretive Center and greeted people as they came in the door. We distributed travel guides, and several brochures including Lewis and Clark literature. The event was well attended with 3500 in attendance.
- Missouri River Country participated in the Corps of Discovery II in Poplar and Glasgow in May 2005. We set up our trade show both at both locations and distributed travel planners and tourist information to all in attendance.
- On April 29, 30 and May 1, 2005 Missouri River Country attended the Lewis and Clark at the Confluence. This was a special event because it

designated the kicking off of Lewis and Clark in Montana. The event was well attended with 3000 people attending all the events at the different locations. Missouri River Country board members had worked several years promoting this event. We are anticipating this event to have a long-term effect for Missouri River Country with the Missouri-Yellowstone Interpretive Confluence Center and Fort Union on the eastern border of Montana. This was an excellent partnership opportunity with North Dakota for Missouri River Country.

- Missouri River Country helped promote the Nashua Lewis and Clark Festival held in May 2005. We did a couple Cooperative Marketing projects to advertise this event. 2000 visitors attended this event.

Create New “Destinations” and Promote Montana’s Trail System

- During the 2005 year Missouri River Country partnered with Travel Montana, Custer Country, Russell Country, Yellowstone Country, BLM, FWP, Corps of Engineers, and USFWS to develop a Dinosaur Trail Brochure, and Birding Trail Brochure. Locations in these brochures were designated to create the trails. Thirteen locations were listed, five of them in Missouri River Country in the Dinosaur Trail Brochure. Twelve locations were listed for birding in the Northeastern Montana Birding Trail. These are two successful projects that happened in 2005. Work continues in promoting these trails and attracting dinosaur and birding enthusiasts to Missouri River Country.
- Missouri River Country also purchased two billboard sign rentals to advertise the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the Fort Peck Interpretive Center.

Access on Public and Private Lands and Waters

- Another boat access was established at the Snowden Bridge site.

Enhance Transportation in Montana

- Missouri River Country sent letters of support for Amtrak. We supported the continued railway passenger transportation through the Northern part of Montana. Amtrak has three stops in Missouri River Country.
- Another project that Missouri River Country was involved in was to put brochure racks at local airports and the Port of Entries located in Missouri River Country. Three brochure racks were installed at three of the ports and the airports will be done at a later date. These racks are stocked with Missouri River Country travel information, including the State travel planner.

Educate Visitors about Ethics and Responsibilities on Public and Private Lands

- Missouri River Country is working on our new travel guide to be printed in July 2006. We are planning to incorporate how visitors should conduct themselves on private and public lands. Work continues on this to accomplish our goal of educating hunters, fishermen, birders and dinosaur enthusiasts.

Montana Promotion Division

Consumer Marketing

- Reviewed marketing information which resulted from the FY04 contracted research from Longwoods Int'l on Advertising Accountability/Awareness and ROI as well as the Winter Conversion Study from SMARI and instituted changes in marketing initiatives based on the results to maximize ROI.
- Continued a successful winter promotion with MacKenzie River Pizza Company, Big Sky Airlines and the Montana Ski Areas Association to encourage winter recreation in Montana by Montana residents.
- Worked with regions and cvbs on a newspaper packaging campaign in both Canada and the Seattle area market.
- Developed in conjunction with magazine media partners, several opportunities for cooperative advertising via magazine ads and special inserts.
- Continued multi-state advertising partnerships including: Sled the Rockies the snowmobile co-op with WY, ID & MT; promotion of the national parks via Fourparks with WY, SD, ID & MT; and promotion of the L&C trail with ID, WA, OR & MT.
- Placed magazine ads highlighting L&C events in several targeted magazine publications.
- Continued to run a L&C specific TV spot nationally.
- Promoted both L&C Signature Events via our 4-state Northwest Lewis & Clark co-op via magazine, Internet and rack cards.
- Promoted the Explore the Big Sky Signature Event as well as the Corps II Traveling Exhibit via in-state TV.
- Created a Cooperative Opportunities Committee with regions/cvbs members to develop opportunities for such promotion. Early Summer Seattle Newspaper campaign resulted from discussions/feedback with this committee.
- Based on information compiled in the Winter Conversion Study – TM's winter advertising firm Mercury Advertising in conjunction with TM developed several campaigns to further define MT's niche in the destination ski market. These campaigns included an exclusive promotion with the high-end outdoor apparel and gear company The North Face and world renowned climber and Bozeman resident Conrad Anker as well as an extensive and comprehensive key market campaign in Minneapolis, MN.
- Created a Cooperative Opportunities Committee with regions/cvbs members to develop joint advertising opportunities.
- For the winter campaigns, combined resources with both The North Face and REI in the key market campaign to further the advertising reach in both those campaigns.
- Conducted an online winter survey of winter website users.

Publications

- Combined the Travel Planner and Vacation Guide into one. The new Vacation Planner has more pages listing major attractions and events to help coordinate cross-promotion and advertising efforts.
- Created a new “Snowcoach” section in the Winter Guide for an alternative to the winter enthusiast.

Tourism Development and Education

- Facilitated, coordinated, and helped finance the development and implementation of the Montana Dinosaur Trail Project. Project involved 13 unique dinosaur display and activity facilities in 10 Montana Communities along with 9 funding organizations. Working with the project partners and facilities, developed 150,000 promotional brochures, devised a statewide distribution and fulfillment system, created a web portal linking all trail facility and community websites or travel service information for easy user access. The trail facilities created a Montana Dinosaur Trail Organization for networking, merchandising, promotion, education and policy development. In 2006, the trail will expand with the addition of one or more qualified facilities. The promotional materials will be updated.
- Installed WiFi Internet service at the 9 state-supported VICs in gateway Montana communities. In 2005, half of the 9 VICs received their Made In Montana (MIM) product display cases. Efforts have begun to implement the MIM product display program in the remaining VICs.
- At the 2005 Montana Governor’s Conference on Tourism & Recreation held the first Montana Visitor Information Center Managers Meeting. These operations and policy discussion meetings will continue at the 2006 conference.

Russell Country

- We continued legislator education about the bed tax and its benefits. We participated in the Tourism Treats day at the legislature. In our “treat” package we showcased arts/culture and agriculture from northcentral Montana.
- We participated in print magazine joint ventures with Travel Montana in Good Housekeeping, Northwest Travel and National Geographic Traveler magazines. We also participated in two newspaper campaigns with Travel Montana, one in Canada and one in Seattle.
- Russell Country and the Great Falls CVB pooled media dollars to have more impact from our warm season magazine campaign.
- Russell Country and the Great Falls CVB produced one travel planner.
- We were successful in applying for a grant through the U S Forest Service to produce a brochure for the King’s Hill Scenic Byway.
- We partnered with Gold West Country to attend a consumer travel show. We also partnered with one of our hotels, one car rental agency and one attraction to attend a travel show.

- The Russell Country board participated by creating an entry for the annual What The Hay contest promoting agriculture and tourism in our region.
- Russell Country's executive director was on the Explorer's Council for our Lewis & Clark Bicentennial event "Explore the Big Sky".
- We hosted a PBS crew from America's Heartland to showcase agriculture and ranching. Filming was done at an organic lentil farm, a wheat and barley farm, a Hereford ranch, and a goat farm that makes soap.
- Russell Country hosted a press trip featuring arts and culture that followed the Hands of Harvest Trails in our tourism region.
- We reprinted the C. M. Russell Auto Tour, which encourages travel through our rural areas. This was a partnership with Russell Country, Lewis & Clark National Forest and Snowy Mountain Economic Development.
- Russell Country participated in a partnership with Travel Montana and several tourism regions to produce Montana's Dinosaur Trail brochure.
- Russell Country's executive director met with Wheatland County Commissioners to encourage them to apply for the Community Tourism Assessment Program. They did apply and they were successful in being chosen for the program.